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SUBJECT: PORT-AU-PRINCE: READ OUT ON SECSTATE VISIT

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 40

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On January 16 Secretary Clinton, Counselor Cheryl Mills, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, and Ambassador Merten met with President Preval and Prime Minister Bellerive. The President stated that his priorities are restoration of telecommunications, electricity and transportation routes. He also emphasized the importance of rebuilding government buildings, improving the coordination of aid delivery with the GOH, and getting the economy going again. The Secretary agreed to the establishment of a joint coordination center under the control of the GOH, with the U.S. and other donors. In order to address the immediate need for government office space, Mills delivered to Preval an MOU to lease the old U.S. Embassy in downtown Port-au-Prince to the GOH Executive for USD \$1 per year.

¶2. (SBU) Summary continued: In other meetings, SRSB Mulet stated that MINUSTAH's priority is to reestablish governability and to do so in a way that enhances GOH credibility as progress is made. UNDP Resident Representative Bolduc said that the UNDP is working to promote the idea of establishing refugee camps. She also said it is important to provide employment so that the population does not sit idle and it has a stake in the country's rebuilding. The Secretary stated that Preval is opposed to the idea of camps, and that the USG must work to build support for the idea within the GOH. End summary.

SECSTATE MEETS WITH PRESIDENT PREVAL AND PM BELLERIVE

¶3. (SBU) President Preval thanked the Secretary for her visit and also thanked President and Mrs. Obama for their support. Preval expressed his appreciation for the creation of the Bush-Clinton Haiti Fund, which President Obama, along with former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, announced earlier in the day. He lamented how over the past two years, Haiti struggled with two major catastrophes: the four major hurricanes of 2008, and this week's earthquake. Preval noted that a helicopter view of the earthquake's mass destruction is very different from what is seen on the ground, and reveals the details of suffering being experienced by each home and family.

(SBU) According to Preval, GOH short-term support to the Haitian population includes three top priorities:

* Telecommunications (Note: Preval mentioned how in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, his only means of communicating with the Prime Minister and Cabinet members was by having them arrive at his residence by motorcycle. End note.)

* Electricity

* Re-establishing transportation (clearing roads).

He also discussed the importance of caring for the injured in four ways:

* Establishing military hospitals, especially in rural areas.

* Providing tents and creating camps for the displaced homeless

* Removing cadavers from the streets

* Rescuing those still trapped and missing

Preval reiterated the urgency of rescuing and supporting victims as soon as possible.

¶4. (SBU) Preval concluded his opening remarks by raising the economic importance of beginning to consider how to help restore the economy, and suggested the creation of a guaranteed fund in order to allow banks to re-open.

¶5. (SBU) Prime Minister Bellerive agreed with Preval's priorities, and added that in order to address these priorities, providing water, food, and shelter, in addition to reconstructing transportation infrastructure, including roads and bridges is essential. He added that there is an ongoing evaluation of buildings still standing to see if they need to be demolished. Bellerive said, "We need to have a vision of the future to see what needs to be rebuilt--and it is not necessarily to re-construct what has been destroyed." He added that one more priority is the immediate construction of government buildings, "not necessarily one building for each ministry," but called for the immediate evaluation of potential sites.

¶6. (SBU) Preval said that the current priority is donor coordination. He cited the fact that the Secretary's plane had to circle the airport and delay landing due to air traffic as an example of the lack of coordination. He described how the GOH is often unaware of when aid is arriving, saying, "We need to know exactly what we need and when we need it." Because they do not know what is arriving in country, they do not know where to store all the equipment and supplies that are arriving. He stress that they needed USG leadership in assisting the overall coordination with the UN.

¶7. (SBU) The Secretary agreed with Preval's assessment of addressing immediate needs and priorities, while at the same time re-establishing priorities. Regarding coordination, the Secretary suggested creating a joint coordination center that would be established by the GOH, with the U.S. and other donor countries leading the initiative, to which Preval and Bellerive agreed. The joint coordination center would be under the auspices of the GOH, and the Secretary expressed how the USG and the international community are ready to provide experts to assist. The location of the joint coordination center is to be determined.

¶8. (SBU) Regarding the distribution of aid, the Secretary offered to establish a system to know what is coming in and going out of Haiti, and that the six existing distribution sites would

continue to remain stocked. The Secretary also added that military hospitals are already being set up and would be fully staffed and supported.

¶9. (SBU) The Secretary noted how fuel cannot come into Haiti without repairing the ports first. The U.S. is sending a team to survey how to begin rebuilding the ports. Currently most fuel is arriving through private ports and to receive assistance in this area, the GOH will need to sign an agreement as was recently done for the airport. The Secretary raised concerns over the need for a waiver of fees to enter ports. She also inquired as to whether or not the GOH is preparing an emergency decree, as was declared after the 2008 hurricanes. Bellerive mentioned that the declaration of emergency has already been drafted in Creole and is currently being translated.

¶10. (SBU) Department Counselor Cheryl Mills stressed the USG's commitment to follow the GOH's lead. Preval responded by saying that the GOH did not have the capability to handle the rescue and reconstruction efforts by itself, but will be assisting with the coordination effort. Counselor Mills assured Preval that the USG was enlisting all of its assets to help, and that the military was here for humanitarian relief and not as a security force (USAID Administrator Rajeev Shah later assured that USAID will continue to step up its humanitarian assistance, inside Port-au-Prince as well as in other affected cities). Preval expressed that he is not concerned with criticisms that military presence is an "occupation" and reiterated that he welcomes MINUSTAH's support.

¶11. (SBU) Counselor Mills then offered, on behalf of the USG, to lease the old U.S. Chancery to the government Executive for a symbolic one dollar a year, addressing a longstanding request of the GOH. The Ambassador presented Preval with a draft memorandum of understanding to that effect.

¶12. (SBU) Preval's plan to attend the donor conference meeting in the Dominican Republic on January 18 prompted the Secretary to express her satisfaction at the DR's willingness to assist Haiti in the relief effort. She suggested that Preval meet with former President Bill Clinton upon his return on that day.

MEETING WITH UN SRSG MULET AND MINUSTAH FORCE COMMANDER PEIXOTO

¶13. (SBU) Present at the meeting in the Joint Operations Center, were Secstate Clinton, Mills, Shah, Ambassador Merten, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Edmond Mulet, MINUSTAH Force Commander Major General Floriano Peixoto (Brazil), Peixoto's Chief of Staff Colonel Quellette (Canada), UNDP Resident Representative Kim Bolduc, and Mirta Kaulard representing the UN's World Food Program. Mulet thanked the Secretary for U.S. assistance and for Ambassador Merten's coordinating efforts. He said that the situation was "going well," and while almost all of MINUSTAH's military staff survived the earthquake, the civilian staff suffered many losses and those vacancies are still being filled.

¶14. (SBU) Mulet stated that MINUSTAH's priority is getting the government back in place. In rebuilding the GOH capacity, he emphasized that the government must have visibility - that is, it should be put in front of the public to enhance GOH credibility as progress is made. In conjunction with that priority, MINUSTAH is also providing assistance by:

- * Providing security at 30 gas stations;
- * Working with the Haiti National Police (PNH) to

photograph bodies (for later identification) and to deposit them in mass graves; and

* working with the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) to provide security for a "humanitarian corridor" into Haiti.

Mulet added that the PNH needs assistance, notably fuel (for vehicles and generators), uniforms (for officers who lost them in their destroyed homes), ammunition and megaphones.

¶15. (SBU) Mulet noted that not all of the damage is in Port-au-Prince. He said that approximately 60 percent of buildings were destroyed in Leogane, and at least 30 percent in Jacmel. Mulet added that the road from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel has "completely collapsed."

¶16. (SBU) Kim Bolduc stated that the UNDP is working to coordinate donors and is promoting a proposal to establish camps to house refugees and to distribute humanitarian supplies. To establish such camps, it will necessary to find and clear suitable areas, fence and secure them, and establish schools within them. It is also important to employ the population so that they do not sit idle, perhaps in work to improve Haiti's watersheds. Through such projects, stated Bolduc, Haitians will have a stake in the rebuilding of their country.

¶17. (SBU) Mulet agreed and said that it is important to put Haitians back to work. While the situation is mostly calm with little violence and people are acting responsibly, "that will not last forever." He also commented that this is an opportunity to rebuild Haiti better than it was before, and that superficial repairs should be avoided. The Secretary agreed and said that Aceh was a perfect example. Mulet added that in cases where buildings have been damaged but not destroyed, they should be demolished.

¶18. (SBU) Myrta Koulard commented that the establishment of camps is fundamental and she has asked the GOH for access to large fields where camps can be constructed. In response, the GOH has only offered recommended distribution points for humanitarian aid which, according to Koulard, "does nothing" to prevent a situation where the aid recipients "go back to nothing." Koulard also discussed the establishment of aid corridors with the Dominican Republic via air, sea and land. She added that her organization needs warehousing points, human resources, security at distribution points and protection for female aid beneficiaries.

¶19. (SBU) General Peixoto said that his troops are coordinating with the U.S. military to provide security for humanitarian aid distribution, searching for bodies, and digging mass graves.

¶20. (SBU) The Secretary thanked everyone for their efforts. She said Haiti has seen a lot of progress in the last several years and, despite this tragedy, the country's fundamental progress still exists. The USG wants to "partner with and support you." The Secretary said that in her meeting with Preval and Bellerive, they asked for more coordination and they expressed their dislike for the establishment of camps. Consequently, "we need to work to sell them on the idea." Haiti is still in shock, she added, "but now they can see and hear the response." The Secretary expressed the U.S. commitment to assist MINUSTAH and the UNDP and to do everything possible to respond to specific requests.

¶21. (SBU) Mills suggested that the GOH may be amenable to camps if we continue to discuss the idea with them. The Secretary agreed and said that the GOH believes that camps may make the security situation worse. Consequently, "we need to find the expertise to explain the idea and build support." She added that she had talked with Dominican President Fernandez, who is willing to commit troops. General Peixoto replied that such a commitment, in order to be effective, must be sustained. The Secretary finished by suggesting that the combined international relief effort needs a "matrix" that outlines "where we are, where we are going, and where we need to be," and by thanking all the participants.

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